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## SALVATION BY WORK

CESARE PAVESE: *Lettere 1945-1950*. A cura di Italo Calvino. 612pp. Turin: Einaudi. L.5,000.

It is fortunate that this second volume of Pavese's letters should have been edited by Italo Calvino, known universally as a gifted novelist, since he has already proved himself an exceptionally perceptive annotator in the first volume of the *Lettere 1924-1944* (reviewed in the *TLS* on September 8, 1966). In a brief introduction he informs us about the sources of the correspondence, explaining that from the vast output of letters written by Pavese in his editorial capacity for the *House of Einaudi* he has selected only those that elucidate Pavese's personality, his writings—a good example would be the letters to Bianca Gattusi with whom he collaborated in the long story, *Fiore di terra* (A Great First)—or the Italian literary climate in the postwar years. One welcomes the inclusion of exchanges, some controversial, on Pavese's own works, with Elio Vittorini, Signor Calvino himself and particularly those with his former teacher Professor Augusto Monti. The preponderance of editorial letters is explained by Pavese's increasing absorption in the task of broadening the Einaudi horizon by exploring foreign titles, literary, ethnological and philosophic, and finding suitable translators for them. But if the personal autobiographical letters are the most fascinating to the wider public, there are few letters which, for original views, sympathetic advice to potential authors, even harsh criticism of translations, do not help us to a better understanding of Pavese the man as well as the writer. In the former capacity, despite an apparent gain in confidence through his growing reputation as a writer of

novels, his sense of failure remained. Only a month after receiving the much-coveted Premio Strega, he wrote to Billi Fiamini, "I really realize that apart from the books I have written, I am only a miserable maggot". Few writers at any period have been more the victims of their fate, their temperament, call it what you will, than Cesare Pavese. Few have put up a more courageous fight against a built-in sense of inferiority than this over-strictly brought-up widower's son who, with asthma and myopia as contributory causes, never succeeded in severing the umbilical cord. Through these volumes of letters—as in the *Lettere di vita* (This Business of Living)—we see him, like a less ingenious Jean-Christophe, trying various emotional and intellectual panaceas in turn.

His greatest craving was for female affection involving physical contact, but his frustrating sexual inadequacy (psychological) is pathetically underlined in a kind of masochistic confession written "a un'amica" (November 25, 1945), which foreshadows words written five years later to a girl he addresses as "Cara Pierina":

I can tell you, darling, that I have never woken up with a woman of my own by my side, that whenever I have loved has never taken me seriously and that I have never known that look of gratitude that a woman gives a man.

The emotional events of his life are variants or recapitulations of the passion when in childhood days Pavese, as he strolled along the bank of the Po with a school-friend, Olga, suddenly catching sight of the same name on a boat, turned pale and fainted.

Work was the most effective the-

rapy against his obsession with suicide, and his own literary creativeness was to a considerable extent stimulated by his anxiety to prove his worth to himself as well as to the public. Yet, ironically enough, when success came, he was unable to enjoy being "treated as a little Caesar" for long. Nor could philosophy or religion subjects in which we see him as an expert in these letters, afford him any comfort. He could not accept the goodness of a God who, as he writes to his sister in the last months of his life, "if he has given me great gifts, has given many cancer and caused others to be born mentally defective".

As the period of the Partisan struggle and its aftermath receded, politics were less of a preoccupation to Pavese. He had sublimated his experiences in stories like "La casa in collina" ("The House on the Hill") and most of the references, in letters, apart from one long report on the "cultural currents" of his region to Fabrizio Onofri, are oblique—such as the tribute to Giuseppe Parrella (who was killed in a fight with the German SS). His human sympathies were torn wide for him to be a political animal in the accepted sense. He refutes the charge of Augusto Monti that the philosophy of his stories is inhuman where the middle-classes are concerned "even of such society [that] does nothing and believes in nothing" one tries to salvage whatever is salvageable. If Pavese had faith it was in his own work, and in many of the letters we see him put up a vigorous defence of what he considers unjust or uninformed criticism, as witness his good-tempered

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## HUMANS AND INSECTS

Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £2 15s.

attempts to show how the Augustan humanists used, to the point of obsession, images or image-systems drawn from five main groups—warfare, architecture, clothes, insects, and travel; a concluding chapter deals with the use of elegiac motifs, and ends (rather in the manner of Caroline Spurgeon) with the evocation of a peopled landscape made up of the dominant humanist images.

The most valuable aspect of this part is its insistence on the importance of figurative language in eighteenth-century writing, prose as well as poetry, and in the necessity for the modern reader to be alive to this metaphorical quality. Much Augustan imagery admittedly seems unexciting and has passed into cliché or lies buried in the Latin root meaning of words; but the reader who will acquire or regain the sensitivity to language possessed by the great Augustans will be well rewarded, and may indeed find himself travelling within the countryside described in Dr. Fussell's "normal geography".

Here again, Dr. Fussell is aware of the dangers of overstatement. He recognizes, for example, that the humanists do not have a monopoly of military imagery, of seeing life as a battle or a siege; but, this caveat made, he nevertheless poshies some of his points too far. Thus it is surely wrong to see "veteran" in Johnson's line "Superfluous legs the veteran on the stage" as in any sense a military image, even though Johnson's Dictionary gives "an old soldier" as one of the definitions. The trouble with image-collecting is that it is too easy to be led away by zeal. One finds what one is looking for. If one is looking for humanists, one can find them behind every bush; if one has already decided that the creature behind the bush is not going to be a humanist, then the situation must be reinterpreted.

An example will illustrate the difficulties. The insect-figure is, we are told, a touchstone of eighteenth-century humanism; putting it crudely, a writer is or is not a humanist according to his handling of insects, real or imagined. Clearly where Swift or Pope is concerned the insect-figure operates for the most part unambiguously (though there is something almost Kantian about the way Pope can feel empathy with the spider and ants and bees, of course, have always to be excepted from generalizations about the unpleasantness of insects). Cowper, on the other hand, is not properly contemptuous of insects, and has not observed them properly, and therefore is not a

humanist—or rather, because not a humanist he is not contemptuous. A passage from "Task" (in which, we are told, "Cowper is engaged in a long battle with the elements") "Any reader of my poems knows that I am not a humanist" from the fact that one does not see the small gilded fly in Lear's sight is gay enough in terms, the reasoning seems clear here, and has a good thing to say.

Similarly, Dr. Fussell is by Robert Hooke. The first of the microscopists was, he and anti-humanist, but Hooke's Preface to *Micrographia* seems to admit that the eye is not as splendid as we are told, and we are roughly five years intervals Professor Montigliano has gone round with a broom and swept up his occasional orthodox (humanist) things so small, evanescent, and hideous, to the bottom of the hierarchy as they are. Yet in one emotion Hooke feels it is contempt for his or its maker. Almost everywhere in his work, described in his words, "These are thoughtfully segregated as 'Atheni' and 'giovani'". A friendly and helpful gesture by one historian to another, for centuries have the historians of the development of the humanist tradition been saved the trouble of the "Atheni" and "giovani" by the research which the author himself has had to undertake, for instance, in tracing the "Saggi giovanili" of Benedetto Bacchini more than two hundred years ago.

What will he, will he, and successively volumes of similarly important books, some of them with the printer's ink of the first publication hardly yet dry. In the present case the broom has brought out a number of articles, which date back to the time when their author was in his twenties. These are thoughtfully segregated as "Atheni" and "giovani". A friendly and helpful gesture by one historian to another, for centuries have the historians of the development of the humanist tradition been saved the trouble of the "Atheni" and "giovani" by the research which the author himself has had to undertake, for instance, in tracing the "Saggi giovanili" of Benedetto Bacchini more than two hundred years ago.

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JEAN ROUGE: *Recherches sur l'organisation du commerce maritime en Méditerranée sous l'empire romain*. Distributed by Parker, Oxford. £5 6s.

One of the difficulties in the study of ancient economic history at present is that Rostovtzeff's two great Social and Economic Histories are being treated as definitive works, instead of being recognized as revolutionary ones. Rostovtzeff's *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* was published in 1926, and forty years of increasing interest in social and economic history have altered methods and problems even in a field as conservative as the study of ancient history; but it remains the most modern general survey of the subject.

M. Rouge is too conscientious, and too intelligent, to assume that he can rely on Rostovtzeff to fill in the general background his monograph needs. He unfortunately did not use Professor F. M. De Robertis's *Lavoro e Lavoro nell'Impero Romano*, 1963, which does now provide a general orientation on problems connected with slavery and free labour, and with free enterprise and state control. He does not, however, seem to be fully aware of the difficulties of writing a monograph on selected aspects of sea trade in the Roman Empire when his adequate general account of even Roman trade, let alone economic history, is available.

He treats the organization of sea trade in the empire under three headings. First is "infrastructure": the geographical conditions of navigation in the Mediterranean, ships, routes and harbours. This is a straightforward, valuable, sensible summary of a group of topics of which a thorough and up-to-date treatment was much needed, and will be correspondingly welcomed. The chapter on ports and harbours, in particular, makes an important contribution to the economic geography of the Roman empire and will, one hopes, stimulate detailed research on the history of individual ports and regions. The only regrettable omission in this section is that of the material furnished by underwater archaeology. M. Rouge is evi-

## ALL SEAWAYS LEAD TO ROME

idently not aware of the rapid progress which has been made in the past few years both in techniques and in the definition of the questions that underwater exploration and excavation can help to answer.

The two following sections deal with the "structure": "port" employer and expressions of a trade in the past, "as the author says" of sea trade. "Les gens du commerce" and "Les problèmes économiques-juridiques". The survey of the problems of interpretation raised by the passages concerning sea trade in the legal sources, with its copious bibliography, is an exceedingly useful contribution. M. Rouge's picture of the world of trade in ancient times. His mastery of a wide range of sources: Greek and Latin literature of all periods, inscriptions, papyri and the law codes, as well as the representations in art of ships, ports and harbour scenes, is as admirable as the historical imagination with which he reconstructs from them the bustling life of the imperial harbours.

It must be said, however, that on present showing M. Rouge's talents seem him better in dealing with "Les gens" than with "La structure". From the point of view of the latter he has made some unfortunate decisions both in the selection and in the arrangement of his material. The attempt to combine a description of the world of sea trade with an account of the laws which concerned it is an interesting one; and there is no doubt that even if it now fully recognized that law and history must be studied together (see Professor Montigliano's *Storia di Storia*), which reviews below, a separation of law and history, and a separate study of each, would be a more fruitful one. The need to ask not only what a shipowner did

but also what were shipowners has been made prominent by a recent work remarkable for the writer's clear awareness of the wider context of problems within which her own detailed research is situated. Dr. E. Ruggini's *Economia e Società nell'Impero Romano* (1961). Dr. Ruggini suggests that in northern Italy in the fourth century trade was largely in the hands of the great landowners; the middle class with a substantial capital devoted to trade who seem to have been its mainstay in the early empire have apparently, at least in this area, disappeared. It is obviously worth asking whether the same process was going on in other parts of the empire. If this proves to be so, the fourth-century laws which attached the obligation of providing ships to transport corn for the state to landal property may perhaps appear in a rather different light.

Connected with this point is another disquieting aspect of M. Rouge's choice of subject: the absence of any discussion of cargoes. The idea that one can study the machinery of sea trade without discussing the cargoes carried and the relation of trade and production seems to be based on the presupposition that apart from the state organized corn supply to Rome and (Constantinople) sea trade was not intrinsically linked to the land economy of the empire by any relations other than those of a market economy. The danger of approaching ancient economic history with such assumptions has been pointed out often enough. The problem of the history of trade in the Roman empire is not only whether the state ever extended its control to all trade and shipping—M. Rouge has no trouble in showing that it did not, and in any case state control was a transitory phenomenon—but also the indirect effects of state interference on the "free" sector, and the vitality and characteristics of this remaining "free" economic activity.

A third difficulty in this terminological method is that it tends to restrict the inquiry to the level of the *drumstick perenne*. The shipowner, the Merchant, &c., at the expense of the study both of larger groupings and of the actual position in society of those who at various periods were attracted or compelled to assume these roles. The need to ask not only what a shipowner did

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## DIRT IS DISORDER

Volume 11: **Legemonia**, MARY DOUGLAS: *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. 188pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 25s.

Signor Romano's major contribution to new knowledge lies in his demonstration of the indigenous roots of Italian socialism. Partly for polemical reasons, partly for lack of documentation, the native contribution to the Italian movement had been undervalued. It used to be too readily assumed that proletarian discontent was first kindled by the efforts of Bakunin. This book uncovers the native sources of the Italian socialist movement. The doctrinal guidance to be found in Cattaneo and Pisaneschi (whose letters Signor Romano edited before the war) is linked to the situation presented by the achievement of unity. In this way, both the later ascendancy of anarchism and the absorption of many of Mazzini's

Signor Romano is at his best in the detailed documentation of personalities, currents and influences within the movement. On larger issues he is less convincing, perhaps because he is hampered by his wish to bear witness for Marx. The many good qualities of the analysis of Bakunin, for example, are marred by his anxiety to score off him on every count. Yet Bakunin's general ideas, though not very interesting nowadays, are sometimes more perceptive than Signor Romano allows. It may be true that the Italian peasants could not by themselves provide a revolutionary movement, but the incidence of rural crime and the subsequent history of Spain do something to justify Bakunin's optimism.

Signor Rumano's repeated genuflections towards Marx and Engels and reverence for Soviet historiography are also strange and irritating because historical materialism would appear to be inconsistent with the plentiful moralizing of this book. Perhaps this simply reveals that the foundations of his study, like those of many historical works are laid in philosophical incoherence. Certainly it seems

Fortunately, there is learning in these 120 pages. The theoretical shortcomings reduce their value. It is remarkably exhaustive and which has thrown up much used here for the first time. Some of the copious data is unselective; with Sigman's leisurely prose, this is a book needlessly long. It is too lavish; a phrase quoted if a sentence is a paragraph is more verbose and trillier than either, and a paragraph will never be used in a document appeals to him. It is sometimes page after page paper articles which should appear in a volume of essays anywhere. Yet these points detract from a favourable opinion on the book as a whole. Learning makes it of quite a purchase in the historical subject. We must hope a fish publisher will find an idea of a translation. A version would be acceptable would have to have the bibliography which the book lacks. It is ridiculous to publish these two volumes out-of-the-way reference, tailored in their information, at least an index of proper each volume. Their value would have been doubled.

a distinguished scholarly tradition which may be traced from the *Année sociologique* school to the late Dr. Franz Steiner, and those who have studied the ideas of Durkheim, Mauss, Huhert, Van Gennep and their congeners will feel that they are in a familiar intellectual ambience. The average social anthropologist will feel at home also with most of the sources used, and will probably gain little in the way of substantive knowledge.

What Dr. Douglas offers instead is a reflective essay which constantly stimulates thought and redirects it in topics of fundamental importance. She writes, moreover, in a direct and engaging style, clear and unpretentious, characterized by a taste for metaphor ("outsiders hurl bits of bone . . . at weak points in the 'cultural structure'"), an ironic wit (once Frazer had said that the interesting question in comparative religion hinged on false beliefs in magical efficacy, British anthropologists' heads remained dutifully bowed when this perplexing question "the appropriate 'Where there is dirt there is a system'"), and Huxfordian provocation ("Money is only an extreme and specialized type of ritual"). The result is a singular and valuable investigation.

The author approaches pollution and taboo, matters which seem at first alien to our own lives, through the common notion of dirt. "Dirt is essentially disorder" and the reaction to dirt is "continuous with other reactions to ambiguity or anomaly."

Dr. Douglas presents as her first and typical example the difficult case of the abominations of Leviticus. She argues convincingly that for Hebrew holiness is exemplified by completeness; it requires that individuals shall conform to the class to which they belong, and that difference of nature is not to be confused. The underlying principle of cleanliness in animals is that they shall conform fully to their class, and the unclean animals of Leviticus are simply those which are not equipped for the right kind of locomotion in their proper elements; they are imperfect members of their respective classes, and are therefore excluded from the scheme of the world. They are, contrary to holiness, and contact with them is a pollution which disbars from approaching the temple.

After this brilliant analysis the author devotes the remainder of his discursive and ingenious work to the examination of the social conditions in which ideas of purity and pollution are elaborated and expressed, concentrating throughout on the problems connected with ideological and symbolic boundaries. She is notably effective in this task, and her book is


On these issues Dr. Douglas is particularly interesting, but if "the body is a model which can stand for any bounded system" it is strictly only prudent to begin an analysis with what is known about how individuals actually regard their bodies, and reference could profitably have been made to Paul Schilder's *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body*. In this connection, too, it is rather odd that Dr. Douglas, who recurrently emphasizes the relevance of the "deviant" and the symbolism of fluidity to the body, should have omitted the derivation of the word *deviant* from *DN dev*, which meant precisely "excrement" (cf. *Mith devet*, "filth"). More fundamentally, and in the same critical vein, a more scholarly survey of past work on classification and ideas of the liminal, tracing an intellectual genealogy and thus establishing a base for further speculation, would seem to have been called for. (Hertz and Mauss on sacrifice, Durkheim and Mauss on primitive classification, for example, an extraordinary omission, this, and Hertz on death were all centrally concerned with Dr. Douglas's "external boundaries" and "internal lines".) Van Gennep deserves far more attention than a mere couple of brief references; Hocart's chapter on "Pority and Pollution" might a

Finally, although Dr. Douglas' unconventional style of exposition is agreeable, a little more respect for the useful niceties of scholarly convention would have been welcome and it is hard to see why either she or her publishers should ever have married a clever book by such a constant and irritating slovenliness about names and references.

In the end, however, it is a tribute to Dr. Douglas's essential erudition and powers of stimulation that such scholarly lacunae and omissions do not much affect the conclusion that this is a remarkable book which shows his Professor Alasdair MacIntyre has become "a fundamental intellectual disciplinarian". It is an excellent introduction to that discipline and makes a particularly refreshing change, from didacticism to thought, when compared with the banality of the textbooks. Dr. Douglas very interestingly offers "a personal view" controversial and often polemical. Her book sparkles with intellectual life, and is characterized by a acute sense of problem, proliferation of ideas, and it genuine concern to understand. Right or wrong, sound or idiosyncratic, it presents the rare and exciting spectacle of a mind

## INSTANT DEMOCRACY FOR STONE AGE MEN

Press. 37s. 6d.



Angus and  
Robertson

Sra. Gómez is obsessed in proving that the "reformers" were committed to an anti-Catholic vision of Spain. They were not anti-religious as such: Giner distrusted atheism, shunned "scientific" positivism and abhorred popular anticlericalism; he was the prophet of a new religion of humanity—some synthesis which, woolly though it might be, still had no place for the Catholic Church.

To Giner and the Krausists the Catholic Church was a human institution whose role corresponded to a certain stage of development. Now it was "dead" and its opposition to intellectual progress was deduced from an interpretation of Spanish history which had been the standard equipment, in coherent but not in tone, of every Spanish radical since 1812. But it is not the denial of the glories of Spain as the hammer of heretics, from the Inquisition to the Council of Trent, which disturbs Sra. Gómez: it is the refusal of kindly efforts of Giner and his followers to face his essential anti-Catholicism.

Srta. Gómez emphasizes the weaknesses of Giger's concept of transformation through a moral and intellectual elite, and it was this elitist conception which lay behind one of the most remarkable creations of Giger and his group: the *Students' Residence* to long presided over by Alberto Jiménez, where personal contact of teacher and taught in a residential, tutorial system was fostered. This was too expensive a way to "reform society," yet the halls of residence of the University City of Madrid represented, to the purists of the Giger tradition, an "American concept."

Gliner dominates this book, which reads with his death: his influence was on those with whom he came into contact, quite extraordinary. Krausist murals were - Protestant in tone; washing regularly outdoors, walks, football and the code of an English public school gentleman were combined with philosophical vagueness of a high order. Unamun and many others had no time for Gliner's ideas, but his personal example and

The Leningrad Public beco endowed with the town's private papers according to the November Service. The 1,000 or inquired, several hundred on Pushkin, a fifty-year-old, translations of Yelizarov, Bagryant, dinnalzh Tagore, and lings with Blok, Mandligniant. The es deal specifically with *Egyptian Nights* and also contain the plan for Pushkin's later prose, fers and telegrams sent by Fadeyev, Pasternak, toles' on her trip to and an album of eight

From the Palaeolithic era to a Parliamentary system in an instant, and that was not enough, production also into independence, is the same of New Guinea's problem: the process and the percepts are analysed from the social, economic and political angles by eleven Australian specialists.

Dr John Crawford explores the recent prominence given to New Guinea, the largest territory outside the Communist world not governing itself. Mr. White calls it "the last great wilderness left on earth". It includes some of the most recently discovered primitive races known to mankind, the "cavill people": in some ways the most primitive to exist today. It is a vast living virtually undisturbed natural stone-age environment. Added to the primitive economic systems there is a range of languages and social and political fragmentation so prevalent in the Territories, and it is not surprising to find "overriding but conflicting range of problems. Many of these problems are as yet little understood by more than a few, but they have begun to capture the interest and attention of many people in many countries throughout the modern world.

Especially interesting chapters are provided by Dr. Norma McArthur

Professor Spate summarizes the education problem:

The expansion of education is certainly one of the gravest issues confronting New Guinea today, ranking with those of economic viability and political stabilisation and of course all three are closely bound together. It must be admitted that while the degree of political responsibility already attained is not alone sufficient to create indigenous intellectual advancement in modern terms, the discrepancy is alarming; on the one hand, an elected majority in the House of Assembly; on the other, a dozen under-graduates at only some scores, hardly hundreds, in a population of two millions, who have never completed a full secondary course. Undirected, such an imbalance could lead straight to a Congolese situation.

The problem the New Guinea languages compose may well prove to be an insuperable obstacle to development in any form we understand. Most of the 750 of them in the island are either not known at all or, best, only in the scantiest degree. Many of them lack minerals naming any higher than ten. Little English is known. Pidgin stands the best chance of being the *lingua franca* but it has to overcome the prejudice of puritanical Europeans; if it fails, I Wurm argues, that it would be unrealistic for the Territories to maintain another New Guinea language as official one rather than English which is too dissimilar and difficult for Melanesians to learn.

Dr. Reys expands the genuine criticism that in the Papua-New Guinea multinational society it is worth controlling on transforming the women carriers of firewood, vegetables and pigs, into carriers of culture also.

In a work which illustrates technical skill and devotion Australia has given and is giving the Territories, it is saddening to see confirmed in Dr. Bettison's chapter how shaky and tenuous the social contact sometimes is between the races, markedly so in Rabaul, New

New Guinea on the Threshhold of a new era. The author should offer material for valuable reflection by the Australian authorities at a crucial stage in the Territories development.

Mr. White's *Parliament of a Thousand Tribes* is more likely to attract recent visitors to the Territory than is Mr. Fisk's work. But in its conclusions it is radically different from all others.

In recent notices in this journal of works on New Guinea by Keith Willey and Sir Grenfell Price, the reviewer gave as his opinion that it would be little short of an ethnical calamity if the new Indonesian Empire in the western half of New Guinea should be extended to the eastern moiety at present administered by the United Nations and Australia. He was concurring in the general judgment of Mr. Willey and Sir Grenfell Price and almost of all writers competent on the Indonesian invasion, anticipated and actual.

Mr. White is now the first to make the serious prediction that the eastern half will ally itself culturally and politically to its Indonesian neighbours. He makes this suggestion fully conscious of the unpopularity of this view outside Indonesia and its allies and totally sure that there is no ethnic or temperamental affinity for such an attachment. He does so also while admitting that Indonesia has no moral, legal or ethnic claim even for the western half it has acquired by power politics alone. His belief has two basic ties, the eastern half to Indonesia because the western half

Of course, this fissure does not immediately arise. There is an intermediate step: although there has only just come into being a Parliament for the three million people of a thousand tribes, 750 dialects and still an artefact culture—Instant Democracy Mr. White calls it—he believes that it will not be long before independence from Australia and the United Nations is asked for, and that as soon as gained given up again. This is the most pessimistic work of the future of New Guinea, at least from the Australian angle. The most contact the tribes have with Europeans, the more they tend to reject them, and the only reason the white administration is still there is because the tribes have been too disorganized to set about its removal—there are assertions not necessarily to be accepted but certainly to be thought about and, if accepted as true, in a deeply lamented.

Mr. White's work eschews personality and colourful background. It advises against generalization to so massive a group of Manes reminding us that its proliferation of tribes ranges from pale brown blue-black, from the very tall to the pygmy, from the brachycephalic to the dolichocephalic, "at the extent of differences nine New Guinea tribesman can be as unlike another as an Eskimo is unlike a Hottentot or a Laplander unlike a Sicilian". In its anthropological analysis, but cautious, in his political inference somewhat less so. *Parliament of a Thousand Tribes* remains a challenging, sobering study, coherent expressed, if perhaps thinly argued. In its rather startling political panacea, and backed up by a useful bibliography.

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## TREASURE ISLANDS

HUGH EDWARDS: *Islands of Angry Ghosts*. 207pp. Holder and Stoughton. 30s.

The Dutch East Indian, Batavia, struck a reef in the Abrolhos group, off what is now Western Australia, just before dawn on a June morning in 1629. Two days later the commander, Francesco Pelsaert, sailed to Batavia for help in the ship's yawl. He got back to the wreck in the yacht Saardam three months later to find that a mutiny had taken place in his absence. A group of some twenty mutineers, led by the second ranking officer on the expedition, Jeronimus Cornielisz, had murdered 125 of the survivors, including twelve women and seven children. Five girls survived by becoming concubines to the mutineers.

Cornielisz and his men nearly captured the Saardam but failed because a group of loyal soldiers was able to warn Pelsaert in time. The mutineers surrendered. Pelsaert tried and hanged seven of them, including Cornielisz. Two others were hanged on the Australian mainland. The rest were tried on the Saardam's return to Java for rape, robbery and piracy. Three were sentenced to exile. The others were savagely punished by breaking on the wheel, garroting and branding. Two, under twenty, witnessed the executions and then drew lots to see which would die, with the winner going free.

The mutiny had curious aspects. Jeronimus Cornielisz was a follower of Tormentius van der Beeke, an Amsterdam painter famous for his still-life, who was suspected to have been a leader of the Adamites, a sect which preached the commonality of women and other heresies repugnant to the Calvinist morality of the times. The captain of the ship, Arian Jacobsz, was involved in the plot as well, and the inquiry disclosed that the conspiracy had begun long before the Batavia piled up in the Abrolhos.

Pelsaert had done a tour of duty at the Mogul court in Agra, and had advised the company that fabulous presents to court personalities were a relatively cheap form of advertising. Among the valuables destined for the Mogul court and rescued from the wreck was the Rubens vase, a marvellous cut from a single agate by a Byzantine craftsman and a great cameo of late Roman origin which inspired a drawing by Rubens, now on display in The Hague.

The wreck of the Batavia was discovered in 1963 by a cray fisherman

named David Johnson, on Morning Reef, in the Abrolhos group. (Skeletons of murdered men were found on nearby islands.) Subsequently the wreck and the islands were explored by an expedition which was largely organized and jointly led by the author of the book under review, Hugh Edwards. Cannon, coins and hundreds of other objects were raised from the wreck. One of the most important results of the expedition, and of Mr. Edwards's other work, is that the Western Australian Museum has been granted title to the area's historical shipwrecks, and the government has provided for a curator of nautical and colonial history who will be expected to coordinate underwater excavations of the six pre-colonial wrecks found so far in Western Australia. This is a step which has not been taken either in Britain, where the law allows individual entrepreneurs to purchase wrecks and exploit them for their personal profit, or in the United States, where the state of Florida, for example, lists its only appointed marine archaeologist to work in the wake of commercial treasure hunting concessions purchased from the state.

Mr. Edwards has attempted to tell the whole story of the Batavia, with partial success. The first half of his book is an account of the wreck and the mutiny, based on Pelsaert's very complete journals. These were first published soon after the wreck in a Dutch pamphlet, *Ongheukene Voyage Van't Schip Batavia*. The journals have recently been translated into English by E. D. Drok, and included in Henrietta Drake Brockman's fine historical account of the wreck, *Voyage to Disaster*. Unfortunately Mr. Edwards has tried to combine Pelsaert's original seventeenth-century prose with a breathless "You are there" television style in which descriptions are not improved by the use of capitals to depict action, as in CRASH BUMP RUMBLE GRIND. The result is that Mr. Edwards's description becomes somewhat confusing; his paraphrase is more difficult to read than Drok's translation of the original.

But when Mr. Edwards comes to his own work on the wreck, and the adventures of his team in the Abrolhos Islands, he is always interesting and often exciting. The book, for all its defects, is an essential addition to the literature of the Batavia wreck.

## BIRD ISLANDS

FRANKLIN RUSSELL: *The Secret Islands*. 238pp. Hodder and Stoughton. 25s.

*The Secret Islands* is an unusual book about an unusual summer holiday. Mr. Russell enjoys an affliction for which he says Lawrence Durrell has coined a word. He is an Islamophile, a New Zealander, one who having been born on an island and left it to become a mainland, feels himself drawn back to islands—beautiful or barren, large or small, near or distant. After fifteen years of growing malaise he left New York and drove north to the still primitive fishing communities of eastern Newfoundland, whose coast is studded with islands, most of them no more than small, sparsely covered rocks in a bleak northern sea. There he knew would be birds innumerable; there he would find himself again, among men who made a scant living among islands for which they had the same obsession as his. "I just don't feel right till I get this island underfoot," said one, and another "I wish I was landing on her for the first time."

Men have withdrawn from most of the islands Mr. Russell managed to land on; they are possessed by migrant seabirds and he was there to observe professionally what they did. There is nothing clinical about his observations; in chapter after chapter he records an event in which he, the intruder, was emotionally involved in what was going on. He was lucky to arrive on Hay Island when the elder duck were making their annual run to the sea with their young under attack from the gull patrol. At first he was only a blunderer among a straggling seaward procession. Then he saw the gulls and thrust himself

into what he calls "a mathematical experiment in survival". The equation was simple. Any duckling on land or water, who lagged more than five or six inches from his fellows, was killed immediately. The gulls twisted down, beaks agape and paddle feet lowered, struck alone or water, and rebounded buoyantly with their quarry. The ducks were unconcerned at the loss of the ducklings and did not even blink as the gulls came down. Their presence was apparently anticipated, an historic fact of the sea-run. Even when gulls struck so close to the family group that their outflung wings swept the air above the ducks' heads, they provoked no threatening move, no quack of fear or rage. The ducks kept leading their broods, erect-necked and watchful, towards the haven of the water.

The islands change and so do the bird species, but always he is there, mostly alone among the massed wings, refreshing himself at the assault of the blind forces that control them. The climax is at Gull Island, honeycombed with burrows of the petrel. There the night is haunted by two cries, one rising from the waiting nests, one falling from the air as the food gatherers fly in after dusk and are away again before dawn, thus defeating the gulls.

On the mainland it was different. He slipped into easy companionship with the fishermen, tough, prodigiously capable old characters like Uncle Benny, who took him to the islands and told him what life was like there in the old days. Poised on the edge of the twentieth century, they are content to know they will never enter it. Mr. Russell has more tragic news of their children. He found them untouchable, wilder than the sea birds he battled with, often stunted by inbreeding, disease and illiteracy.

## Fiction (continued)

## AN AMERICAN IN GREENELAND

ISAAC ROSENFELD: *Alpha and Omega*. 279pp. Macmillan and Kee. 30s.

ROLF SCHNEIDER: *Bridges and Bars*. Translated by Michael Bullock. 189pp. Cape. 25s.

*Introduction* 3. Stories by New Writers. Rachel Bush, Christopher Watkins, John Wheway. 253pp. Faber and Faber. 25s.

*Alpha and Omega* collects stories written by the late Isaac Rosenfeld between 1941 and his death in 1956. It is not a very satisfactory collection, but presents an interesting example of the development of a representative American writer in the mid-twentieth century.

The stories from the early 1940s are set in a grimy world of spiritual and emotional failure: an American extension of Greenland. But, lacking Greene's moral concerns, they lack real edge. The failed-writer-turned-journalist is not a figure whose social setting has the significance and interest that might justify an old-style naturalist treatment, and boredom is the only response evoked by the earlier stories in the book, except for "The Colony", an interesting speculation on the probable fate of a quasi-Indian nationalist movement should its Gandhi die before independence seems possible.

Gradually Rosenfeld leaves realism for fable and parable. Failure and loss tend to be central to his vision: the prophets of "The New Egypt" are worshipfully walled up in a great pyramid. "An Experiment with Tropical Fish" shows lightly, in a parody of scientific observation that religious authoritarianism is the

only alternative to detached scientific optimism; on the other hand, the parable "The Cyclist" makes claims for the elevating powers of the imagination: "We travel in it as high as we can, and there are vehicles, whatever our art, that take us there."

The last four stories seem the best in the book, though this may only be because we are not yet far enough from Jewish New York of the 1950s to find these as mannered as their predecessors. But "King Solomon" is well imagined, and "Coney Island Revisited" nicely Guttwitzes nostalgia for urban adolescent sexuality.

The seven stories in *Bridges and Bars* each pluck at an exposed nerve of German and European intellectual life. Anti-Semitism, organization man, final war, fashion-changes, fantasy action lives of exiled intellectuals, and love poisoned by political suspicion: these subjects are adroitly handled by Rolf Schneider for effects which are now tragic, now wryly humorous, but always humane and disturbing.

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## A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

MARY LAVIN: *In the Middle of the Fields*. 215pp. Constable. 25s.

GEORGE MACKAY BROWN: *A Calendar of Love*. 156pp. Hogarth Press. 18s.

CARADOC EVANS: *My People*. 155pp. Dennis Dobson. 18s.

D. E. CHALKWOOD: *An Afternoon of Time*. 174pp. Angus and Robertson. 18s.

Mary Lavin's new volume of short stories is the product of a mature and skilled writer. Her rural Ireland is neither folksy nor quaint; simply, it is a background which she accords due respect.

Miss Lavin might well be cited as proof that there is such a thing as an "essentially feminine writer". Men in her stories may be respected, adored, mothered, despised, hated; but neither the heroines nor the narrative voice ever see them as simple equals. There is always something a little bit aloof, a little remote and mysterious about men in Miss Lavin's eyes, whether they be employers, lovers, or casual acquaintances making uninvited passes. The style is limpid and unharmed, the whole effect quietly impressive.

George Mackay Brown's first volume of stories is a fun more conventional piece of twentieth-century Celtic writing. He plays up the Orkney as a strange and remote

community, setting its present as a surviving peasant community (with fishing and the Kirk counterpointing wenching and drinking) against its past, comprising fierce seafaring Vikings, remote saints, and saintly sinners. At his best he can produce pleasant light character sketches, or acceptable Quiller-Couchish fables. At his worst, in "The Storm Watchers", a play for voices, he crams *Riders to the Sea* with *Our Town*. Some of his literary echoes—a twentieth-century gravelly voice with his Yrnik; a sixteenth-century priest anticipating Donne's nineteenth-century elegy—are unhappy. But his bold, clean narrative line is a strength and there are enjoyable incidents.

Caradoc Evans's newly revised *My People*, by contrast, remains an example of the right way to use the remoteness of an exotic peasant community. Evans's Wales was a fabulous Hell. These gritty stories, accom-

panied by a fine collection of photographs, delivered in a narrative and literary style which is both simple and profound, have counted for little.

As though to celebrate the attainment of this ascendancy, the Museum has issued a handy *History of English Furniture*, illustrated with 100 plates, 100 pages, 11.50. It is a book which should be in every home, and is a most useful and interesting addition to the Museum's collection.

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## AUSTRALIAN PRIMITIVES

JAMES HACKSTON: *Further Clears Out*. 208pp. Angus and Robertson. 22s. 6d.

HENRY LAWSON'S *Best Stories*. Chosen by Cecil Mann. 273pp. Angus and Robertson. 37s. 6d.

COLIN RODERICK: *Henry Lawson*. Poet and Short Story Writer. 70pp. Angus and Robertson.

The Australian James Hackston is in his late seventies. He has had three careers: as a young man he was a cartoonist and book-illustrator, his best-known work being the designs provided for C. J. Dennis's *Sentimental Bloke*; twenty years later he began to write short stories for the Sydney weekly, *The Bulletin*; later still he turned out a huge amount of light verse, also for *The Bulletin*.

In his preface to this collection of James Hackston's stories, the Adelaide poet and editor Douglas Stewart appears to take him seriously as a major talent. But, in fairness, the prospective reader should be warned that unless he has a really close interest in Australasia, he will find these tales rather poor stuff. Although Australian writing has well and truly come of age, there still exists a substratum of journalism which, because its subject-matter is the fast-disappearing outback, is the least sympathetic of those localities—and in Australia they are many—who demand of Australian literature that it be Australian rather than literature.

James Hackston's coy little yarns were really tailored for the popular weekly in which they were first published; but in read them as a collection, even to read more than one at a sitting, is to realize the paucity of the material.

Henry Lawson's *Best Stories* have been chosen by Cecil Mann, and well-chosen in that the best of Lawson really is to be found here (though there is much too which is mediocre). Even in the best, however, Lawson's vein of sentimental quaintness makes rather sickly reading nowadays. It is a pity that Australian criticism has chosen to select Lawson as the turn-of-the-century writer to be most admired. His characters were second-hand and their feelings were second-rate. And his actual writing is dismal. Lawson at his best was a small-scale entertainer; as a literary artist he hardly begins to exist.

An entirely different viewpoint is proffered by Colin Roderick's slim volume, which is based on lectures given by the author at Queensland University. In addition to proving, by its very existence, that Lawson is still academically respectable in Australia, Mr. Roderick's book stolidly champions his cause, even attempting to make out a case for the verse which the majority of pro-

Lawson critics find it tedious to

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Aeronautics

GINAS-SMITH, C. H. *Aeronautics: 1. Early Flying up to the Reims Meeting, 21pp. 20 plates. I.L.M.S.C. 5s.* There is as much about balloons and airships as about heavier-than-air craft in this Science Museum booklet, but the account goes right back to the true beginnings and summarizes accurately the vital period of development up to 1909. The coloured plates make it an attractive production.

AGRICULTURE

PHILLIPS, JOHN. *The Development of Agriculture and Forestry in the Tropics*. 221pp. Faber and Faber. £2 10s.

Professor Phillips has now produced a revised edition of his five-year-old book, though this may only be because we are not yet far enough from Jewish New York of the 1950s to find these as mannered as their predecessors. But "King Solomon" is well imagined, and "Coney Island Revisited" nicely Guttwitzes nostalgia for urban adolescent sexuality.

The seven stories in *Bridges and Bars* each pluck at an exposed nerve of German and European intellectual life. Anti-Semitism, organization man, final war, fashion-changes, fantasy action lives of exiled intellectuals, and love poisoned by political suspicion: these subjects are adroitly handled by Rolf Schneider for effects which are now tragic, now wryly humorous, but always humane and disturbing.

Herr Schneider's skill in tripping up the reader is perhaps best instanced in "Metamorphoses", whose opening invites an angry rejection of so direct a plagiarism from Kafka (with whom the lurid misleadingly com-

parates it), but which develops a very much more subtle and powerful changing commercial fabric, quietly though explicitly a Kafkaism among the intellectual literary fashions which are to recognize themselves.

Modern German literature far from suggesting that the man generation is unchanging. In "The Bridges" Schneider is both shrewdly and calmly reduces Jews to a forbidden sexual object, and is aware that the quietest of the victims of his pastiche are the victims of his pastiche.

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It is still a certain amount of *parti pris* in writings about Berlin, as though he had only just been discovered, but Mr. Ellis's own combination of sympathy with judgment is sufficient justification for the continued currency of his excellent book.

LINDSAY, I. MURRAY. *Sailor in Steam*. 147pp. Angus and Robertson. 25s.

Mr. Lindsay, a Scot now living in Australia, writes of his career at sea, travelling mainly between India, the Far East and Australia. It is a simple, undramatic tale, but told pleasantly and with a slightly old-fashioned charm.

SPENCER, MARGARET. *Doctor's Wife in Kabul*. 191pp. Robert Hale. 21s.

With *Doctor's Wife in New Guinea* and *Doctor's Wife in Papua* behind her, Mrs. Spencer continues her saga of life in the territory. She writes knowledgeably about the people and their customs, about malaria control and much else. She can catch the atmosphere inside an aeroplane and the terror that comes with the sudden eruption of a mosh.

History

ROSS, R. K. and KILLEN, H. *The Glory of the Free*. Illustrated by G. D. Seaburn



